



## **Diversity Task Group**

Date: January 11, 2021  
Time: 6:45 – 9:15 pm  
Location: Virtual Meeting by Zoom

### **Minutes**

In attendance: Katell Guellec, Rebecca Gruber, Kelly Lynema, Lynette Culverhouse, Brooks Harrelson, Carlos Morales, Marian Weisenfeld, Louise Popkin, Chris DiMeo, Lenard Diggins, Elizabeth Dray, Kellye Eversole, Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, Paula Jordan, Shafaq Islam

At the beginning of the meeting, Kelly Lynema shared that the meeting would be recorded. About 10 minutes into the night's meeting, Katell Guellec asked us to keep conversation live, and not have side conversations in the chat.

Discussion about the meeting being recorded:

- Kelly Lynema shared that the decision to record the meeting was made by town management staff, Adam Chapdelaine (town manager) and Jennifer Raitt (director, planning and community development). As an open Town meeting, the Town has requested these meetings be recorded because there were many disagreements at the last meeting; these disagreements were escalated to Town leadership's attention.
- There was a lengthy discussion about the decision to record a DTG meeting for the first time. Some members felt uncomfortable and that the space was no longer safe. Other members stated they were okay with the recording but wished that it had been communicated with more notice and more transparency around the decision. It is not clear if there is a plan to record all future meetings and whether this is a policy that uniformly applies to all Envision Arlington task groups.
- The recording was described as "Big Brother watching" and felt like DTG members aren't capable of settling disagreements.
- Members said that it would have been better to have Adam and Jennifer there to explain the rationale.
- Several questions were posed to Kelly Lynema and answered to the extent of her knowledge, including:
  - Will the recording be public? Kelly responded that it will not be publicly shared but is available to anyone who asks to see it. She said one purpose is as a fact-checking mechanism.
  - Can DTG vote about whether to record the meeting? Per Kelly, that isn't an option. Katell will follow up with town counsel Doug Heim on whether DTG has any authority here.
  - Is this a change for all Envision Arlington task groups? Kelly wasn't sure and said she was just asked to record this meeting.
  - Is this request to record a defensive measure pertinent to a legal action? Kelly said no, that it is a fact checking mechanism, and that it is a point of administrative procedure.

1. Approve December minutes:

Kellye Eversole made a motion to accept the minutes as is. Marian seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous with one abstention.

2. Discussion about the meeting being recorded, continued:

Kellye Eversole made a motion to send a letter of protest about DTG being singled out to have our meetings recorded, and others agreed that it felt DTG was being specifically targeted. Members discussed and added the following thoughts:

- The letter should include that the DTG Chair should be notified in advance at least 48 hours, thus allowing the Chair to notify the DTG mailing list that the meeting will be recorded.
- Letter should ask that it be up to DTG to decide whether to be recorded.
- The letter should include a commitment by the Town Manager and by the Director of Planning and Community Development that the recording be destroyed after the minutes are approved, and to notify DTG in writing that the recording has been destroyed.
- The letter should include that meeting participants feel uncomfortable with being recorded, and that being recorded would take away from the safety and open communication inherent in DTG's meetings.

Lynette Culverhouse seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous with two abstentions and one person who didn't vote.

3. DTG appointment to Police Civilian Review Board Study Committee:

Carlos Morales is here to request serving as the DTG appointee to the study committee. Mr. Morales gave his background and history, and why he's interested in this appointment. Attendees discussed the following:

- One attendee was excited about Mr. Morales' background in statistics and asked about Mr. Morales helping us to understand what is the true make-up of diversity in Arlington, even beyond the CRB Study Committee.
- Another member agreed and seconded the desire to have an understanding of the real nature of diversity in Arlington, particularly from the Rainbow Commission's perspective around the entire LGBT+ diverse population. Also to know what's been effective in other communities and how it can be translated to Arlington. Also consideration of where Arlington will be in the future, changes in demographics, etc.
- Others voiced interest in understanding the resident population's true diversity for full representation in our Town departments, as well as impact and opportunities for Arlington based upon the Commonwealth's new police reform bill.
- Chris Dimeo passed a motion to support Mr. Morales. Louise Popkin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 11 in favor.

Someone asked about DTG making Mr. Morales's appointment public, and Katell agreed that that would be done.

Three members left the meeting as a protest to its being recorded. One person stayed to listen but said they would not be speaking.

#### 4. Review of group meeting protocols:

Katell presented a framework that originated from Jane Lynch, which is used by VISIONS when facilitating trainings and community dialogue. These are proposed as a way to help DTG members use meetings to engage in respectful dialogue.

- Try on (you may or may not adopt ideas in the end)
- It's okay to disagree
- It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack -- self or others
- Practice "self-focus" (Use "I" statements and speak for yourself, or name the group you're speaking for, rather than saying "we"; also notice what is happening in yourself to trigger feelings, so that you're not reactive)
- Notice both process and content
- Practice both/and thinking (more than one thing can be true; can be especially hard for those in privileged groups. It helps to look for common ground.)
- Be aware of intent and impact (impact trumps intent, it's not an excuse to say you didn't mean it. My job is to say "tell me more, help me understand.")
- Maintain confidentiality (no cross talk, we do not have the privilege of describing someone else's thoughts, feelings, actions)

After this summary, attendees offered the following thoughts:

- Staying on the agenda would be helpful in abiding by the above guidelines.
- The Chair has the authority to steer conversation to the agenda.
- DTG should work from an agenda that is published in advance with the ability to modify the agenda during the meeting.
- One person suggested we add "calling in vs. calling out."
- It was recommended that we remind people at the beginning of meetings of our group norms, and that each DTG meeting attendee take accountability for themselves to abide by the norms.
- Kelly Lynema suggested that these guidelines be included in DTG meeting announcements.
- A couple of people suggested the addition of duration of time for agenda items.

#### 5. New business:

- Brooks Harrelson introduced another agenda item that was brought to his attention by a teenage neighbor of his. The issue is the lack of POCs on the pictures of the new high school on the building site and in other locations. Also a problematic photo of basketball players in the gym--players are predominately Black, spectators are predominately white. Brooks recommends DTG write a letter to the Town's Director of Communications (Kelly Lynema also suggested writing Julie Dunn, Director of Communications for the Schools). Jeff Thielman has already agreed about supporting this issue, but DTG's support would be helpful. Marian suggested asking Drake Pusey, AHRC Outreach, and Lynette Culverhouse, AFR Outreach, to join in the raising of this issue. Rebecca will mention this to Drake to add to his agenda for his upcoming meeting. Brooks Harrelson will write a draft letter; various meeting attendees offered to provide feedback.
- Kelly Lynema reported that the Envision Arlington survey is now available. It is focused on issues associated with Covid-19 and issues of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Arlington. The survey is available at: [arlingtonma.gov/survey](https://arlingtonma.gov/survey). She

asked DTG members to share the availability of the survey widely and encourage anyone over the age of fifteen to complete the survey.

DRAFT